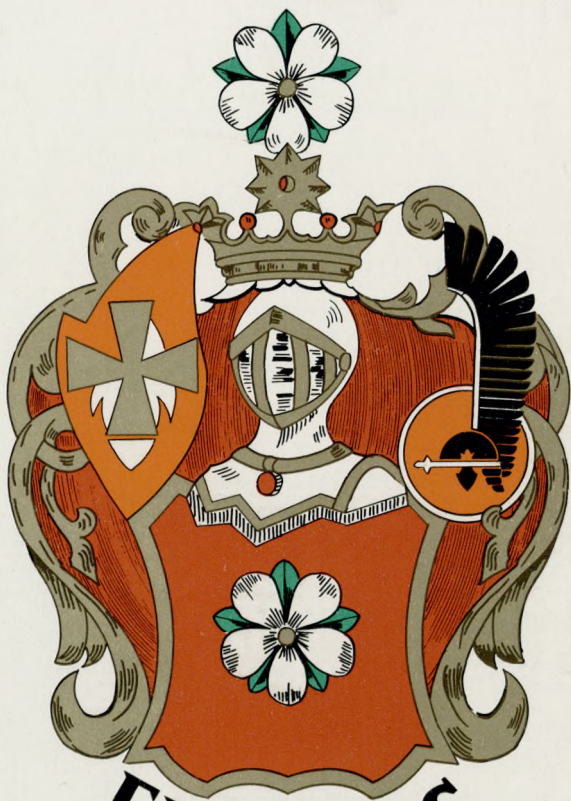


# Star Hunger



VICTORIA JANDA



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For Marya Sabourba -

To a sister "zviag bouzeyni"

With corded best wishes!

Victoria Zander

October 21, 1945



# Star Hunger

By  
VICTORIA JANDA



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*To*

**FRYDERYK T. JANDA**

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I

WIDE ENCHANTMENT





## BRIGHT LEAVES

From the bright leaves that blow,  
That I have come to know,  
I hear a voice throughout the night, the day  
Singing the dark away.

To its clear cadences my dreams arise  
From hidden graves, released by dust that flies,  
And, opening wide their starlit eyes, recall  
The spring before the fall;

The short lived summer that had never known,  
Had never held the joy of flowers, blown,  
Against its breast; the trees that lost  
Their young buds in the frost —

O stay, bright-eyed! O stay to dwell; remain  
Forever in my heart, each beating vein;  
And teach me how to build in each new hour  
A white star-reaching tower!

## ANOTHER APRIL

Another April glistens with new rain,  
A quickened pulse beat rises on the air,  
In green and silver shines the earth again,  
The sun anew suspends its golden stair.

How many Aprils has this wild heart known,  
And, breathless, rising to new ecstasies,  
Followed where other dreams before had flown  
Upon the evanescent, vagrant breeze?

Always the chase was ended where the trees  
Open astonished flower-eyes to see  
Wild bird nests sheltered by green canopies,  
The gold invaded by the ardent bee.

## RELEASE

The rose — remembering the wilderness,  
The fresh sweet waters of its long desire —  
In high impassioned pleading for release  
Flings wide her crimson flare of fire.

The scattered petals tremble to the ground  
To burn upon the shadowy green grass,  
Then, soundlessly, are whirled and lifted up  
To fly, still burning, on the winds that pass.

So is my thought an echo of some past —  
By searching winds from deep oblivion stirred —  
Rumour of roses, falling through the air,  
Spun into song again by word on word.

## WIDE ENCHANTMENT

Now heavy rains arrest the fleeing spring  
In this sweet apple bloom upon the bough,  
This crowding green, brushed by a robin's wing,  
Never before as deeply hued as now,  
And these bright lilac plumes against the day —  
To feathery fragrance changed beneath the moon's  
Tremulous gaze before he hides away  
Behind a cloud — all hold spring's vibrant tunes.  
This wide enchantment holds me prisoner, too!  
I find my hours are shorn of restful sleep.  
I rise to drink with trees the mist, the dew,  
Wading among the grasses, ankle-deep,  
    And match the beating of my heart, my brain,  
    With falling accents of the rushing rain!

## WILD PLUM

I gaze at your white boughs,  
Flung wide to chart  
The wild bee on her way;  
I probe my mind  
For words of ecstasy,  
But only find  
A high, sweet, wordless singing  
In my heart.

## HAWTHORN IN MAY

One night I saw a shooting star  
Into my garden fall;  
At dawn I was awakened by  
A wild bird on the wall  
Singing:  
    "The thorn — —  
Awake, the thorn  
That round your window grows — —  
The thorn, the thorn  
This early morn  
Is flaming with the rose!"

## LAST SPRING'S LOVE

I would in April madness  
Fly on my wing-shod feet,  
My face upraised to thunder,  
Along the busy street,

To snare the wind's wild sweetness,  
The ardour of new rain --  
Armed with these treasures I would  
Invade your heart again!



## CREATION

I would be  
A fertile plant and never sleep;  
But faithfully  
Lift small green worlds upon my steep,  
Lithe stem; and have no care,  
But, always turning to the light,  
Drink rain, breathe sun, the dew filled air  
Throughout the night.  
Then in my hour,  
Before the song-birds rise,  
I would unfurl a shower  
Of stars 'neath dawning skies!

## IMAGE OF THE SKY

Spilled through a yellow dandelion shower,  
The scattered petals of an early flower  
Lay in a half-moon on my lawn.

While by the wall, like treasured ancient lore,  
A thorny bush her rosy crescent wore  
Of bursting buds — and it was dawn.

And I thought how wild summer, flying by,  
Let fall to earth an image of the sky.

## IN THE NIGHT

Do you suppose  
The lovely petal of the rose  
Could bloom on thornless stalk as well?

How can you tell  
That wild sweet music cannot swell  
Throats other than the nightingale's;

Or the wild tales,  
That haunt the star's wide, sweeping trails,  
Were never told, retold, or heard before?

Hush, the quaint lore  
About the thorny bush that wore,  
A short wild season, crowns of gold and flame —

The ancient name  
Of joyous mountain birds, that came  
To sing their love-songs in the moon's full light,  
Is but a wordless singing in the night. . . .

## EARLY PRAYER

### I

#### (THE WATCHER)

That early prayer not for myself was said,  
Not for myself that flame of ecstasy  
Those early days; the wine, the priceless bread  
In sacrifice were given not for me.  
No thing was desired but a gladness known  
In finding a small path that led into  
A secret hollow, densely overgrown  
With tangled vine and tall slim grass, that blew  
Wild in the wind or trembled in the sun,  
Entranced by joy and with the watcher one.

This lonely quarry was embowered, sweet  
With pale wild roses, sprouted wind-sown wheat  
And shrubs of blackberry in green lace,  
Dew-silvered willows in the rose-hued face  
Of each new day. Here stood a broken wall —  
In conclave stone faced gods, austere and tall,  
Immortal grass-wreath on each brooding head,  
Stayed past some glorious age, now long since dead,  
To dream in the sun, weep with the rains,  
To tremble with the passing noonday trains,  
And hold the blackbird's trebble in their wings  
Of wild grape vine. And here the watcher brings  
Today her dreams, uncertain, opaline,  
Yet to their dreams akin.

## II

### (THE LISTENER)

In these long sun-drowned days of summer flight,  
Heavy with fruit and sunlit silken grain,  
The dreaming oaks stand in the golden light  
In spring-time green; their singing branches make  
Bright snares of oaken leaves that try to hold,  
In trembling joy, the fugitive, swift rain,  
The slanting rays of gold.

The singing branches pause, the grasses wake  
To listen to high fugues rung through the air,  
Then winds awake, and song is everywhere:  
The oaks recall the once remembered ages  
That, garlanded with green heroic brows,  
Recall the storied conclaves of the sages,  
Held in the shades of cool eternal boughs.  
The strange contagion of their deep memory,  
Spreading from tree to every listening tree,  
Falls on the listener's awed, bewildered heart:

The fragrant jasmine, and wild buttercup  
Mingling with tall bright flowers reaching up  
To touch high windows, where the orchard trees  
Lean heavy, scented boughs; a white birch cart,  
A horse with white starred head. But wide gray seas  
Blot out the earth, the sky, the very air.  
Then bright shawled heads of women bow in prayer  
Before the golden altar railing drowned

In flowers being blessed; the Virgin's day  
Is hallowed as the sweetest hours of May —  
This autumn day when the last flowers are blown.  
The clearly swelling sound  
Of children's voices fills the mystic air,  
Mosaic, sunlit, thrice forbidden stair,  
While one small child walks in the storms alone.

### III

She walks in storms alone — yet unafraid  
Of their low thunder, cloud-hung sky and air,  
Nor their swift fire that burns through blackened skies —  
Unbraiding to the winds the long bright hair,  
And baring white impatient feet to wade  
Through heavy grasses in the singing rain,  
Lifting the windlings from the broken trees  
To hang above the door, the broken pane —  
The broken pane, star-pointed one calm night.

She knows a longing at the gray cloud's flight,  
Awe at white clouds across the clearing sky  
Whirling to visions of the white robed Maid  
With cherubim on soft wings flying by  
To cluster at her feet: they lift dismayed  
Sweet eyes adoringly, while petals blow  
From small hands holding flowers white as snow,  
And bear away the vision while they blend  
Their sweetly chanting voices with the wind.

Light streaming heavens from gold star on star,  
From moon-curve, very like a door ajar  
Unto celestial law, unsolved by mind,  
Yet shedding wonder on the listener's heart,  
And on the gleaming iridescent world  
Of snow – a wonder, trembling, undefined –  
Until the voices of the bells, unfurled,  
Lift high their choral, waking with a start  
The song . . . the song!

(THE SINGER)

And all the stars draw near,  
Leaving their high-swung firmament to hear  
Its treble rise, the great bells stay their sweep,  
Amazed, to listen to their counterpart.  
And all the night is radiant until  
The silver-pinioned, rose-hued dawn, earth bent,  
Gently descends from heaven's lighted hill  
To find the small transfigured singer spent,  
And softly folds her head in morning dreams.

O proud heroic time when brightness grows  
Within the soul, spreading celestial beams  
On lowly objects – known yet never known:  
The broken chimney like a flower pot,  
Star flowers growing on each graceful stem –  
Lost to the naked eye in azure heights –,  
The narrow yard, the rocky alley, grim  
With sheds and barrels, turn into a grot



With shining splendor by the full moon sown;  
While hooded in soft snow on stormy nights,  
The street lamps, kindly smiling, stand in rows  
Beneath the silent oaks whose strong black boughs,  
So subtly traced with white, serene and proud  
In classic beauty, dream. The houses drowse,  
The tall white goddess rides from cloud to cloud.

The heavy snow, no longer soft and light  
Nor crystal starred – sad winter broods on age,  
Casting a grayness on these hills of white.  
And now the singer turns another page  
And finds spring humming underneath the snow,  
Her soft tones vibrant in the virgin rains.  
The singer follows, youthful brow aglow,  
Young arms outflung, the eager feet unshod  
Yet bravely stumbling over thorny plains,  
Where yet no rose, an imprint of a god,  
Has reared a lovely head. She always finds  
The lane that leads up to the marble stair,  
With heavy oaken door securely barred.  
She turns again to meet the rushing sound  
Of flying storms and skies no longer starred,  
Alone, with empty arms, and broken prayer.  
The clearing is made while still the storm-winds sweep  
Down its dream laden paths.

Oh, joy filled hours,

When winds are hushed, and skies no longer weep,  
And sweet new life stirs promises of flowers!  
The gold lost in the night!

The desperate

Frail hands are guarding priceless blooms: the one —  
Bright, myrrh-fragrant, star-bound and exquisite;  
Fair, many petaled bud of loveliness,  
The other — eager to blossom in the sun.  
But still the skies are dark and comfortless,  
Mosaic, sunlit thrice forbidden stair,  
And there are storms, their faces stamped with fears,  
And brave eyes, blind with rain or stinging tears —  
Yet one voice, drifting from the mystic air,  
With courage rises through the soul's despair. . . .

## LAST NIGHT THE MOON

Last night the moon looked down in glee  
And laughed at my old, gnarled oak tree;  
The oak tree trembled angrily:  
"I'm not so old," he said to me.

Tonight he lifted up his arms  
And caught the moon with all her charms:  
Now you can see her lovely face  
Imprisoned in his bold embrace!

## A SINGING LUTE

The brook one night on waking found  
Two silvery arms around him wound,  
And, looking up in his dismay,  
He saw a lady fair as day  
Upon the air in graceful flight,  
Robed in the loveliness of night.  
She laid upon his clear, cool breast  
Her troubled head; her pale lips pressed  
Upon his gently murmuring heart.

Now, through the day, though they're apart,  
He follows her in wild pursuit —  
His heart, his soul, a singing lute.

## O RISING MOON

O rising moon, do you by daylight fly  
Across the secret meadow of the sky?  
Tonight your finely chiseled horns you point  
Where brighter stars shed their rays to anoint  
The tulip-purple shadows of the night.

O rising moon, what angels mark your flight,  
What angels mark the goal whence you aspire?  
Who can divulge the secret of your fire,  
The fulness of your blooming? Knowing, soon  
You must find some cloud grave wherein to lay  
Your flight worn wings — as some one made of clay—

Even as I, my wings, brave as your own,  
Must fold upon some broken song, alone.  
O rising, silver horned, O wingéd moon. . . !

## TOWERS

Above the towers white flocks of clouds  
Fly on, fly on  
To gleaming skies of Samarkand,  
To far Ceylon.

My thoughts as they, in flocks, take wing  
Over sea and hill  
While I, on rooted, helpless feet,  
Stand still, stand still.

## THE BUILDER

I built my house of wood and stone,  
I fastened it with iron,  
Against the winter's cold I raised  
A hearth to build a fire on.

The walls against the elements  
Proved to be strongest bars,  
And, oh, the roof, it proved to be  
A tower to the stars!

## FOR FLORENCE

The apple blossoms in the spring,  
Brushed gently by a wild bee's wing,  
Blowing their beauty on the air,  
Are not more fair

Than the soft roundness of her cheeks,  
Her parted lips, whenever she speaks,  
Her silken brows that, winglike, rise  
Above her eyes,

Where tender secrets wait to bless  
My eager heart with happiness,  
And mirror in their happy light  
Stars for my night.

The wild bird singing on the bough  
Is echoing her voice, I vow;  
The wind, the sun play in the snare  
Of her brown hair.

In her lies beauty of wild things,  
In her the grace of flying wings;  
The apple blossoms on the air  
Are not more fair.



## FOR MARY

When the new morning broke  
Through dark, through mist of pain,  
And the dim room awoke  
To brightness once again,  
Day stepped across the sill  
All curious to see  
The tender miracle;  
Drank in the melody  
Of your impatient wail;  
Caressed your rosy brow;  
And brought her gifts of pale  
Silver, the shining glow  
Of gold for your dark head.  
And then, oh, then, it seemed,  
Until that glory fled  
These, these the heights you dreamed!

Your journey is not done —  
The hills wait in the sun.  
Follow on feet, unbound,  
The paths your spirit found  
Where spring eternally  
Dreams from the deathless tree  
To be pursued and caught  
And into glory wrought.

## VALENTINE

Before the snows of winter sail  
Down to the rivers, to the sea,  
O you will hear the nightingale  
Sing from a wild enchanted tree

About a legend penned in gold,  
And wrought in lace and filigree —  
A legend many ages old  
Yet, strangely, only known by me:

A nightingale, one winter night,  
Was sent to sing the cold away;  
He brushed a snow clad tree in flight  
And, lo, it sprouted leaves of bay.

Then from the bough he sang to me:  
“I sing by heaven’s starlit eyes,  
By this enchanted laurel tree:  
Only through love you shall grow wise!”

The laurel tree, the singing bird,  
In intricate design and art —  
Thus, as I know it, word for word,  
Goes this old legend with my heart.

## FOR ARMELLA

Between my gate and poplar tree,  
In April's sheen,  
The valley-lilies eagerly  
From jade towers lean,

Spilling from each snowy bowl,  
All April through,  
Fragrance for my avid soul  
And thoughts of you.

## LASSITUDE

Content to ride and stare  
Through the translucent air,  
Skimming indifferently  
Green laces on the tree,  
Spilled sunshine on the street  
Mangled by wheels and feet,  
Housetops, walls, and sky  
With a vague and tranquil eye —  
I am content to stare  
At nothing everywhere.

## ECHO

I am as free  
As any bird could be  
Who leaves behind —  
A fairer land to find —  
Her nest for other birds.

That joyous thing,  
Which caused my heart to sing,  
Is lost, is lost  
In this invading frost —  
The echo of these words.

## TRUANT HEART

My mind was poised for flight  
To where  
Immortal eye had pierced the night  
Beyond the air.

My wings, unfurled, gleamed silver-white  
And, fetter-free,  
In circles clove the morning light  
When, suddenly,

My truant heart looked down to see  
You waiting here  
For me.

II

STAR HUNGER



## STAR HUNGER

### I

He would not heed the broken stoop,  
The well that needed mending;  
The fence that whimpered in the wind,  
He said, was only bending  
Its knees before a god.

He told about strange pagan gods,  
Their holy fires burning  
Among the sacred oaks-of-home;  
And of his own returning  
To that beloved sod!

At nightfall, when the skies were clear,  
We heard him softly singing  
About bold eagles, chained to rocks,  
That one day would be winging  
Over a sea-born land.

He shared the apples from his trees  
With children that came running;  
He shared his bread with alien men  
That others would be shunning,  
Nor tried to understand.

And then one day we found him gone,  
And heard, as night was ending,  
He walked beneath his apple trees  
To where the old road, bending,  
Still echoes his farewell.

The orchard waits for him in vain,  
Grown wild without his tending;  
Only the sea winds bring his songs  
To haunt the old fence, bending  
Above the ruined well.

## II

She raised her eyes in one swift look  
And, seeing it was late,  
Picked up her basket full of eggs  
And clicked the wire gate.  
She propped the beanstalk, picked the chives  
That grew around the door,  
Then stood a moment on the stoop  
To view her white scrubbed floor.  
The wind caught at her flowered skirt  
With fingers, cool and bold;  
Ruffled the linen on her breast,  
Her shawl of faded gold;  
Then followed her in through the door  
To dip his airy wings  
Into the fragrance of fresh bread.  
He flew past rosewood strings  
Of rosaries that hung beneath  
A hand-carved Virgin-shrine;  
Then out the window flew again  
To join the columbine.

While listening to the vesper bells  
Echo the age-old prayer:



“The angel of the Lord proclaimed  
Unto a Virgin fair:  
‘Hail, Mary, full of grace,’” she found  
Herself on memory’s wing,  
Returning to her highland home.  
She heard the whispering  
Of mountain pines, heard thunder winds  
Awake the chamois’ hoof,  
Awake the stork, asleep upon  
The humble straw-thatched roof . . .  
Her mind was stilled with rustling grain,  
The scent of wild pear trees;  
Her heart, forever, gently stilled  
In mountain reveries. . . .

### III

Although they walked their paths apart,  
Each one with different aim,  
They left with me in mute command  
An ever burning flame.  
And I remember, in my heart,  
The dreams, the simpler things  
Of everyday:

Sweet echoes rising  
Aloft like singing birds  
From mountains only known in dreams  
To ring her sacred words  
Of prayer;

His songs holding in them  
The rustle of soft wings

When pigeons crowd the city's roofs  
And elm trees pause to hear,  
With awe, the rising moon's soft chime,  
The first star ringing clear.  
The secrets of the stars, he told,  
Their hunger for the earth,  
That, when a star falls, now and then,  
It gives the sod new birth:

The first that left its starry plains,  
To travel ether's pale,  
Found this fair planet stilled with snows,  
Swept with an icy gale.  
It lit the barren trees with leaves,  
With flowers starred the plain,  
Awoke the forests with wild song,  
Silvered the fields with grain.  
Oh, when a star plants in the soul  
Of man a hunger, deep,  
To walk with him his waking hours,  
And light his hours of sleep  
With dreams, then he must ever search  
The hidden road to find  
Where truth and beauty flee from man  
Forever on the wind  
Of time, and follow, though he go  
Alone, renounced by all,  
Knowing his hunger as the stars',  
Heeding the stars' high call!

## EVANESCENCE

### I

Oh, if it were but possible to snare  
That strange elusive thought that passes by  
In everlasting circles! Oh, to dare  
To follow shadows of the stars that fly!  
Oh, it is peace to pause, at times, and stare  
At vague thought forms that rise to swirl and shift  
Like mute arpeggios through luminous air,  
Or ghosts of butterflies so still, so swift.  
Lost to the eye, thought beckons forth the mind  
Through boundless space, through spheres, unknown and  
    vast,  
So like the long, firm hands of deathless wind  
That bend, and bend to break — until, at last,  
    The mind, bereft of will, of mortal clay,  
    Steals silently into the air . . . away . . .

## II

Oh, to be able to bring forth the thought  
That, born of beauty, stabs the heart with pain,  
Disturbs the mind, and follows, and will not  
Be stilled with silence, with indifference, slain;  
But suffers its own pain and counts the tears  
That flow unseen upon the stillest night,  
And salvages from out the hell of fears  
What is the soul's inheritance of light!  
To gird the thought with purple, crown with wings  
Of golden feathers that belie the sun,  
Thrust in its hand the high wind's silver strings,  
The strength the soul from solitude had won  
    With stars for guidance — armed thus, thought would  
    make  
The blinded see, the slumbering awake.

## STILL YOU ESCAPE ME

Still you escape me, O elusive one!  
Though you are ever deathless as the wind,  
And as the white flames of returning sun  
That flee the clutching hand — I cannot find —  
Only your footsteps light upon the grass,  
Or where you rouse the slumbering wild bees  
In momentary flight, when boy and lass  
Join eagerly their lips beneath the trees.  
Oh, are you lost in the white light-of-moon  
Upon the waters of a summer night  
In rapture listening as the wild winds swoon  
With sighing on the waves? Or has the light  
Of some dim star ensnared the path you flee?  
For but a while — then, you again are free.

## THE POET DREAMED

The poet dreamed, and fashioned silver strings,  
Then spread them where the summer grasses blow  
For winds to brush them with their singing wings,  
Praying the sun to sweep them with his bow  
And fill the earth with heaven's joyous sound.  
But far beyond the seven hills and streams  
The sun, the winds were cold and silence bound,  
And clouds hung black above the poet's dreams.  
Worn ill with sorrow, he arose one night  
To walk the wilderness — his only light,  
A poignant pain that led him back to find  
His treasured lyre, silent, deaf, and blind —  
    He wept the night until the sun-flecked morn,  
    Nor knew that then a nightingale was born.

## FOR MAN TO FIND

My dreams with ardor, spun into a chain  
Of shining links, give forth a silver sound  
Each time I touch them with my thought, and gain  
Each time, in turn, new music, more profound  
Than any culled before, until the beat  
Of song sets fires of joy within my veins,  
Lifts up above the earth my mortal feet  
To travel in Elysium's blessed plains.  
So I would spin in gratefulness and pray —  
Until the secret hour of my release —  
Oh, I would fashion for a better day  
Bright, countless links of beauty, joy, and peace  
And drop them where the way of life is long  
For man to find and fashion into song!

## EUTERPE

At night you come unbidden  
To sear my heart, my brain  
With this unrest and peacelessness  
Akin to pain.

Your hands, the magic workers of your soul,  
Upon the harp-of-being wake a strain  
That burns into my soul,  
My heart, my brain.

At dawn you go, as you have come — unbidden;  
Your fleeing footsteps wane,  
Leaving with me an emptiness  
Far worse than pain.



## INK ON PAPER

### I

Feathered of wing  
And curved of beak;  
Heads poised to sing  
So fine and sleek;  
Round, staring eyes  
In wide surprise;  
Tails spread in frills  
For writing quills –  
These thoughts, these words  
Are snared like birds.

### II

I found you  
And bound you  
With breathless desire,  
And spread these black crosses around you.  
I chiseled fine arrows,  
Fleet as wild sparrows,  
And shot them out swift to surround you.  
I stalked you  
And mocked you  
In bitterest ire;  
Then, with these black chains, I locked you.  
Then, secretly weeping  
At this barren reaping,

To sleep in my heart I rocked you.  
But morning's bright fire  
Found you mounting higher —  
Beyond the short reach of my rein;  
And where I found you  
Is left, though I bound you,  
This empty, black-filigree chain.

## WALLS OF SPACE

My roving thoughts out on the crossroads run  
To look in all directions with the winds,  
And watch awhile the advent of the sun  
On burning altars rise, where heaven bends  
To meet earth's pale, translucent walls of space.  
To those high altars they would fly to trace  
Their trembling origin from deepest sea;  
To find the hidden meanings of the word,  
Hidden as pearls in shells of secrecy;  
Know the unknown, and hear the voice, unheard,  
That dwells somewhere beyond those walls of space. . .  
Dare to unveil its fled mysterious face.

## WORDLESS RHYME

Again those long, slim hands of vague unrest  
Reach through the lucid air, the paling sun,  
Stealing my mind to follow the swift quest  
Of stormy clouds, that whirl, and, whirling, run  
Their strange, eternal course and drown  
In blue indifferent seas.

The restless mind is wooed by soft voiced trees  
And so, returning, contemplates the blown  
Wild garlands, woven by the wind,  
The hushed, repeated beat of wordless rhyme  
By tireless bright leaves, that blend  
The air, the sun, the wind in muted chime.

By voices, slowly rising, thought is drawn  
Into half spoken words that fall and gleam  
Like peony petals on the darkened lawn,  
Or the crescent moon's pale beam.

## INVOCATION

O lucid billowing, O pure sweet air  
Against my face, bared throat and breast, the strands  
Of my blown hair – seeking that line,  
With your cool, arrow-pointed hands  
Along my body, closest to my heart,  
You whirl around me, white as whitest snows,  
Essence of bread, of wine,  
Lighter than flakes that fall,  
Than petal, leaf, or bird;  
Fainter than my faint call,  
Yet, you hold on your waves the embryos  
Of worlds, unseen, unheard.  
O air, life giving air,  
Divert your hidden art  
From its wild forest lair,  
Over the sterile sands  
To flow, to thunder through my mind, my heart,  
My eager, eager hands.

## NIGHT PIECE

Open the windows, night is clear and calm —  
Too clear, too calm in contrast with the storm,  
Unheard, yet raging in this darkened room.  
Open the windows to the mystic glow;  
I would drink deeply of its star-fused balm,  
Seal these storm-laden hours in a tomb,  
And bury my white feet in the soft snow  
To stand in dreams, contented, calm, and warm  
As this slim arrow-pointed, leafless tree,  
Untroubled, stark, and free;

Or climb the midnight air  
Upon a surging prayer  
To reach a star to wear,  
Through darkness, in my hair.

## MONOLOGUE

You've stood me well, O heart, you've served me well;  
Throughout the storms your beat was firm and high;  
You've led me safely through the fiercest swell  
Of every battle. Oh, we two have braved  
Many a friendless night when the steep sky  
Seemed an inverted, black abyss.

Yet we have known the bursting April boughs  
Against fair skies, and known a garden saved  
For blossoming of asters in the fall,  
The full ripe grape plucked from a sun-drowned wall.

Now battle flags are furled, no bugle calls,  
The grove once scarred is green again and glows  
With peace. Why do you falter now,  
O heart, why do you pause? Each beat you miss  
Is like the petal of a rose that falls,  
While suns gleam brightly on the last hill's brow.

## QUICKLY CLEAR AWAY

This long neglected altar, overgrown  
With vegetation — almost flowerless,  
Is bearing bitter fruit that we alone  
Must reap and taste, then, comfortless,  
Must die.

So quickly clear away  
The hostile growth and cut the branches high,  
To clear the shadowed air; and set the fire  
To burn the twisted boughs that would betray  
Our eager feet. Oh, let the flaming pyre  
Be lost in clearing azure, and be done . . .

While full upon the altar strikes the sun . . .



## THOUGHT

My thought, through fled, forgotten hours  
Out of heart and out of mind,  
Countless as the petaled showers,  
We can trace yet never find —  
Past countless eyes that turn my way,  
Hostile eyes of foe and friend,  
Quick to challenge, quick to flay —  
But slow to comprehend.  
In secret I have kept your measure,  
Steeped you in nostalgic tears,  
Sunned you with the joyous treasure  
Of my laughter through the years.

Now you are hard, are smooth: fine seed  
That neither friends nor foe who rush,  
Nor those with whom I dare to plead,  
Nor blackest earth can crush!

## A PRAYER

Dear Lord, tonight I humbly bring  
This flame, that rises like a wing,  
Burning my heart with breathless song,  
Lifting my trembling soul among  
Your stars — to shine with fleeting light.  
Dear Lord, accept this prayer tonight.

## ANOTHER DAWN

Oh, silent, silent, silent now  
The fields with snow,  
And strangely silent are somehow  
All things that grow.

This calm, brave heart is but the same  
When night is gone —  
Before there rises in a flame  
Another dawn!

III

LATE SUMMER



## LATE SUMMER

### I

What can I say with my small stock of words  
In this fair tongue, or in our very own  
That we both hold so dear? What high winged birds  
Of golden voice from mountain heights would loan  
Their songs to my dumb lips in praise of you?  
What songs, what songs to win you from this thought,  
This sombre mood, and lead you again to  
Return to this sweet world our love has wrought?  
No prayer that I could say would have the power  
To break the phantom walls that rise between  
Your heart and mine in this relentless hour,  
No tender words prevail — for I have seen —  
    Oh, I have seen in your unseeing eye  
    The lost years of your youth go winging by.

## II

All that the summer of my heart can give  
Of honor, faith, esteem — all these that wait  
Upon the god that wakened late to live  
Within my heart, and gave its proud estate  
In vassalage to you, and, giving, bound  
My flying feet to travel with your own,  
Made my soul pause and harken for the sound  
Of your dear voice — all these you hold alone.  
And, though returning springs shall nevermore  
With budding myrtle twine my troubled brow,  
And nevermore can I unlock the door  
Wherefrom the key is thrown away, yet now  
    Late summer roses climb my garden wall,  
    Full asters bloom — beloved, take them all.

### III

The asters lift their purple on the air,  
And bare their eager hearts to hold the sun,  
And, though the gardens are no longer fair  
With June and all her tender buds are gone,  
Blown into flower, vanquished by fleet time — —  
Fleet time, that never begs but gathers all  
Of youth, of beauty, fruit from every clime,  
Ships from the sea as dust beneath her pall —  
Yet summer's late sun warms each flower head;  
Its rays uncurl the fragrant leaf once more;  
The late bee to the waiting gold is led.  
Come like the sun, the bee, oh, come before  
Their petals and my many thoughts of you  
Fall, one by one, and shed their purple hue.

#### IV

Age waits upon your threshold, I have seen  
His shadow fall across the sunlit fields  
And darken all the brightness and the green  
Of wild sweet clover that the summer yields.  
You did not heed his footsteps as he drew  
Unto your doors that open toward the dawn;  
You were concerned, instead, with blooms that grew  
Around your feet that now, you find, are gone.  
He has kept watch though you were not aware,  
And mirrored his own look within your eye,  
Touching with frost the raven of your hair;  
He made of you his most resigned ally.

Age waits! Nor all the heedlessness of youth  
Can make him break his wand upon this truth.



## V

I dreamed that you and I, but yesterday,  
Walking along the highways of this town,  
Dwelt in a pagan land that hidden lay  
Among the wilds. You wore a laurel crown,  
And royal chanters of the Orison  
Arose at dark before each morning broke  
To hear you hail anew the rain, the sun  
At altars built beneath a sacred oak.  
Mine were the votive offerings to find,  
Upon the fields, of crimson in the grain,  
Wild hazel fruit with purple grape entwined.  
When your soul fled to meet the sun, the rain,  
I followed weeping, though I knew no fear,  
To fall and burn upon your oaken bier.

## VI

When first I looked on beauty through your love,  
The earth was gay with April, and, above,  
Birds that had left the South were flying by  
And calling to their nesting mates. The sky,  
Intensely blue, seemed breathlessly aware,  
Even as I, how all the earth was fair,  
More fair than all the glades of paradise,  
Invaded by the ardor of your eyes.  
How greatly we were blessed, no mortal knew,  
Nor could have understood, for only few  
Are given by God's angels to lift up  
To mortal lips the full immortal cup;  
So we both, lost in wonder, little knew  
It was through love that beauty round us grew.

## VII

Do you recall those last rays of the sun,  
Streaming upon the lake through summer trees,  
Painting the dancing waves as, one by one,  
They stormed the shore in broken melodies?  
The sighing dusk crept softly through the wood,  
Spreading upon the waters her dark cloak,  
And hung her shadow laces where we stood —  
And then the moon and all the stars awoke.  
Then, in the muted rising of the pale  
Moon, suddenly, from out a bush, near by,  
We heard the sweet, impassioned nightingale,  
Flinging his heart up to the starlit sky.

I felt your lips and gave a sudden start,  
And knew that dawn was breaking in my heart!

## VIII

When fading eyes no longer may behold  
The purple of the lilac; when the rose,  
With all her fragrant glory and her gold,  
Shall be as dust upon the wind that blows;  
When my ear, tuned to your low laughter, grows  
Deaf, deaf save to that inner voice that calls  
Me, urgently, into that dim repose  
Beyond your arms, and these protecting walls,  
Shall I have peace? Oh, will my anguished heart  
At last in quiet contemplation lie  
Of all that life had thrown upon the mart,  
All that was lost, without a tear or sigh?  
Or will the thought of you bring then, as now,  
A sudden flush of gladness to my brow?

## IX

I must take leave again, the door stands wide,  
The strange cold air beats down upon my face  
And blows gray ashes from your fireside.  
Your window, blank and cold, stares into space,  
Holding no welcome glow of light or fire,  
No laughing, tender face against its pane,  
No shining eyes that eagerly conspire  
To captivate this wandering heart and brain.  
The ship stands in the harbor set to sail —  
I know not where — some new port of the sea;  
The flag upon the mast blows in the gale,  
And men will say — what they will say of me —  
    But only you will know my bitter part:  
    On your cold breast I could not warm my heart.

## X

So I had left you where the hill, receding,  
Draws up her summer laces to her breast,  
And, rising, leans to where the wild cranes, leading  
Their feathered squadrons, vanish in the West.  
I knew you loved the lushly growing valley,  
The wide sweep of the meadow and the plain,  
And that the city, where the masses rally,  
Ensnared your youthful mind with hope of gain.  
Mine were the terraced, rocky hills to climb,  
Alone with loneliness and thoughts of you,  
To find a handful of that fire, sublime,  
To set among my own where darkness grew.  
    But now, though fires-of-hills disperse the gloom,  
    Across their gleam I see your shadow loom.

## XI

How silent, strange, and hostile stand these walls  
That held so much of beauty, joy, and song —  
So many echoes of our whispered calls,  
Of swift replies, an eager, laughing throng,  
Had known the still, swift rush of blessed tears,  
That fell on our fierce words like clear soft dew,  
And swept away the hostile barriers,  
And starred your eyes as joy could never do.  
Now only silent walls remain, although  
The same kind stars look on me from the sky,  
The same bright sickle moon keeps watch. And so,  
Because these still endure, I fling this cry,  
    Winged with a song, upon the winds that blow —  
    A mad song — that you loved me long ago. . . .

## XII

I cannot bear to see the waters break  
The light of stars and moon, as waters will,  
Nor bear to hear a night bird softly spill  
His liquid music on the restless lake;  
I cannot bear to see the south moon climb  
Up, up the silent shadows of that hill  
To seek the path where, side by side, lie still  
Our footprints of that long forgotten time.  
That long forgotten time — its buried wings  
Amid the silence of the crowding years —  
Is live and vibrant with the sudden tears  
This surging beauty of the evening brings.  
Lo, now the moon has passed beyond the hill,  
Kind shadows fall . . . Lie still, my heart, lie still.



## I WOULD NOT CALL YOU BACK

I would not call you back, I am afraid —  
Afraid of all the looks your eyes would throw  
Across this quiet room, all planned to raid  
With wordless weapons what I've learned to know  
As my heart's citadel — now you are gone.  
As when the plundered, staring hopelessly,  
Find yet that darkness flees before the dawn,  
And rise, and build, and know that they are free,  
So I have gathered what was left of this  
Poor shattered heart, and, giving it in thrall  
To sovereign mind, made certain no wild bliss  
Could follow there — nor penetrate some call  
Or echo of the past, where, night and day,  
Mind waits to censor all the heart would say.

## THE GUEST

You rested in this chair before the fire,  
Watching the sparklets leap the hearth and fly  
Into the void. "How quietly they die,"  
You mused aloud. "Do they so quickly tire  
Of life when lost from their own element?  
Still it is good to see them, good to feel  
This warmth, my dear, to know that you are real  
In these dark days when worlds with storms are spent."  
I set the fire upon the hearth anew  
Each stormy night — and nights are all the same —  
And hold in readiness this chair for you,  
Calling against the void upon your name —  
    And wait. . . The sparks fly upward on star-wings,  
    The leaping fire of your returning sings.

## WAITING

I'm weary watching the road,  
The night, the morning sky,  
Waiting for your gay whistle,  
While only the winds go by.

The earth is deep with shadows  
Of clouds across the sun,  
My heart is heavy with sorrow  
And tears — now you are gone.

## O HEART OF MINE

Break, then, — break, if you must —  
It is better so —  
You could not keep the trust;  
Let the god go.

But, still, I have been told,  
O heart of mine,  
No broken cup can hold  
The sacred wine.

## IN SEARCH OF JOY

### I

O city, I and all the crowds that pass  
In silence or with laughter on the lip,  
And those whose eyes speak less than vacant glass  
In windows of your walls, and those who flip  
The coin and lose through heads or tails, or win  
Through either one a momentary bliss,  
A meager happiness from your wide din — —  
Let all bear witness to the truth of this:  
We builded you when dreams and hopes were high,  
We snared the fire of stars to give you light,  
We shot the air with steeples to the sky,  
Flung monumental bridges to your might,  
Then left you like a worn, discarded toy  
To search in wind blown fields for our lost joy.

## II

The fields stretched wide beyond your boundary lines,  
Stormy with billows of sweet meadow grass,  
North flanked by mountain sides of scented pines  
That, marching, climbed from out a narrow pass;  
Beyond the hillocks of a rolling land  
Fluttered the pennons of the ripened grain,  
Beneath the noon day sun a golden band,  
Muted to silver by the passing rain.  
Oh, young were we again, and, free and gay,  
Sang with the larks, and mocked the cuckoo's call,  
Challenged the echo that across a bay  
Hid in an ivy covered mountain wall;  
Then watched the shadows stalk the fading light  
And slipped with them into the restful night.

### III

We found a road of sand that leapt away  
Through orchid thistle bloom, through slender reed  
Into a hollow; then, a little gay,  
Climbed up a hill with laughter in the lead  
Of woodland winds; then proudly swept around  
A gnarled twin oak. An hawthorn daringly  
Strung its wild coral beads above a mound,  
Asleep beneath a weeping willow tree.  
So here, we thought, some centuries ago,  
Even as we, perhaps, some came to find  
A lasting joy and found — or nearly so —  
This peace with none to break it but the wind  
    Until we came in search of joy and found  
    An ended road, a grass entangled mound.

## AN OLD PORTRAIT

Her hands forever folded on a book,  
Subtly compelling in their frozen grace.  
Were they to lift in motion they would look  
Like dove's white wings held captive in black lace.  
The gleaming arms through gossamer, fold on fold —  
Of lace, of shade, of lace — flow up into  
A gentle shoulder line of perfect mould,  
A gentle bosom of magnolia hue.  
Above these gentle curves a vivid face  
Lifts on a throat, the angels would call fair;  
A mobile mouth — where laughter seems to chase  
The sombre thought, the sunlit Titian hair  
    Dispell the sombre thought in gray-blue eyes,  
    Thus making them half joyful and half wise.

## TO A POPLAR TREE

You stood a few brief moments in the sun  
In all your golden glory and your grace,  
And now your leaves keep falling, one by one,  
Like tears down summer's sadly greying face.  
I watch you locking branches in despair,  
Like naked arms and hands that try to hold  
The last bird's flight upon the frosty air,  
A fugitive sun-ray of paling gold.  
I, too, am loath to see the summer wane,  
Like you I shed seared leaves of cherished dreams;  
I leave, unharvested, the fruit, the grain,  
As winter stills the melody of streams.  
I hear the north wind's flying, see its low  
Gray wings above us scatter ice and snow.



## IN OCTOBER

The poplar still inviolate stands,  
The storm that bent its boughs with snow  
Has blown away to foreign strands  
And waiting seas. Its green leaves blow,  
Washed clean in this cool autumn air;  
Its supple branches reach across  
My window sill — twined in my hair  
They would be recompense for loss,  
Would be sweet recompense indeed.  
The shrubs burn with a singing flame,  
Though asters all have gone to seed,  
And little flower, hundredfold,  
Unknown to you by this strange name,  
Has lost its petaled loveliness.

The air is golden with the sun,  
The walk is deep with burnished gold —  
Still birches stand in gold no less —  
While with the winds that autumn weaves  
Upon my head fall, one by one —  
Softly as breath — the golden leaves.

## AFTERGLOW

### I

If I can take my dreams with me to dream,  
I shall be happy though I go alone  
And dream the long, long while. Though it may seem  
No thing can stir where silence dwells like stone,  
I shall be busy with the earth, and there  
A quick response from earth will surely find:  
Swift messengers will come from everywhere  
To carry all my dreams into the wind.  
And you will hear the wind take up my song  
And weave it through the tangled boughs below  
Your open window, whisper it along  
With gay lipped poppies in the afterglow,  
    Then leave it with the immortelles to keep  
    With their bright beauty, while I, dreaming, sleep.

## II

Serenely, lightly on the air  
Shall fall this negligible dust,  
And come to rest upon the fair  
Sweet bloom of earth, or cling as rust  
To helpless vine and tender leaf.  
Oh, better far, and better still,  
After its journey, pale and brief,  
To fall into the crucible  
Of garden loam, as sustenance  
For dewy blossoms on the thorn,  
Or full-cheeked pears, or acid quince,  
Or fragrant pollen to be worn  
By golden bees when they are drawn  
In breathless moments to the sun!

## THE LAST SONG

Lay her in a pine hewn box,  
Now she is dead —  
“She best loved all simple things,”  
Be it said —  
Shroud her breast with linen white  
Of homespun weave,  
Close her eyes and fold her hands,  
But do not grieve.  
Gather flowers from the fields,  
Blowing sweet;  
Stand them up in earthen bowls  
At her feet;  
Stand them straight in earthen bowls  
At her head —  
They will be kind guardians  
For one dead.  
Gather from the scented hills  
Boughs of pine —  
They will serve for this last feast  
As heady wine;  
Lower her with one last song  
Into the earth  
Where she will eagerly  
Await new birth!

## I SANG FOR YOU

I sang for you at morning,  
My song was high and gay,  
The birds and low winds listened . . .  
You laughed, and went your way.

I sang for you at nightfall  
In accents, soft and deep;  
The stars came out to listen,  
But you were lost in sleep.

My song, while night was paling  
Her tapers, one by one,  
Was lost on broken wing among  
The trumpets of the sun.

And now my song is ended . . .  
It could not break your sleep . . .  
Only the kindly night and stars  
Arise to hear me weep.

## HOW BEAUTIFUL IS AUTUMN

How beautiful is autumn, though the leaves  
That were so green in summer sigh and fall;  
And though the restless sparrow frets and grieves,  
Still marigolds loom bright against the wall.  
In sacrifice the sumac lights its fires;  
In ardent flame the vines are leaping high;  
The sun strums softly on its western lyres  
As calmly it descends the paling sky.  
Passionate one, do you recall the hill  
You climbed with breathless wonder in the spring,  
And, standing on its crest, reached for a quill  
Dropped from a mountain bird's high flying wing?  
Submerge yourself in this autumnal sea,  
Find — all you were — all that you dreamed to be!

IV

IN THIS DARK HOUR





## CANDLE SONG

I am the fire to guide you,  
Burning through the dark,  
Lit by Poland's immortal  
Iridescent spark.

Oh, be glad of my fire,  
Short the time or long,  
Lifting up through the silence  
The flame of my song.

Come, though the day be dying,  
Come through starless night  
To touch your sightless candles  
To my singing light!

## IN THIS DARK HOUR

Where can we turn to flee in this dark hour,  
The darkest hour of this — or any age —  
When work falls from the hand bereft of power,  
And bitter tears blot out the printed page;  
When man has turned to vulture in the sky  
And swoops with evil portent on our tower  
To pillage treasures; and with howling cry  
To burn, to kill — destroy our nation's flower . . .  
Take Poland's lore of legend, history, song,  
A priceless warp, and fit it to the loom;  
Then spin and weave a fabric, fine yet strong,  
Of dreams and deeds to last beyond the tomb,  
To shine with tears, to beat with burning thought —  
A fabric dark with grief, yet nobly wrought!

## POLAND

What could my helpless tears avail you now —  
Avail you now or ever, O dear land,  
The first for liberty to pledge your vow,  
The first to raise your loyal fearless hand?  
Tears cannot feed the starving and the weak,  
Nor heal the sick, give eyes back to the blind,  
Nor life into an infant's shrunken cheek,  
Nor reason to a mother's maddened mind.  
So I shall keep my tears and weave them strong  
Into my body's blood, my soul, my heart,  
And fashion thoughts and words into a long,  
Long plait of lightning, thunder's counterpart,  
For generations, yet unborn, to read  
Of crimes committed in the name of greed!

## BLACK HARVEST

O reaper, it is growing late; your scythe  
Has rust of blood upon its gleaming sheen  
And idles at your feet, dropped from your lithe  
Strong hand. Do you recall the waving green  
Of fertile fields, the gold of ripened grain?  
Aimless you stand amid the blackened stubble,  
The bullet riddled bodies of the slain —  
Your country shattered into shapeless rubble.  
Your weary face, your eyes, now dry of tears,  
You raise to search the distant cruel sky,  
Thinking that, even as the dark night nears,  
An evil foe may strike the hour to die.

O reaper, reaper, it is growing late;  
And nothing left for you to reap but hate!

## DIRGE

The many faiths my heart and my soul knew  
Were buried in the deeps of deepest sea  
With all their wedded loves, or false or true,  
With ceremonial sacrifice — with glee,  
With weeping — laid upon each secret bier.  
Then armoured with a sweet immunity,  
Fine welded from betrayal, pain, and fear,  
My spirit rose once more to ride the sea;  
And, girded with elations through the dark  
Of rising storms, knew how each one would wane.  
So round wild, rocky reefs sailed its fine bark  
And put in harbor at a well loved plain,  
    Only to find death tearing flesh and bone —  
    O God, O God, would that it died alone!

## FLIGHT

The drab shawl fell to her thin shoulders showing  
A faded kerchief of dull gold and blue,  
Adorned with purple blooms, like those once blowing  
In grain fields of old Poland. Reaching through  
Mosaic windows, tenderly the sun  
Laid fingers on her trembling hands that strung  
Sweet rosewood beads devoutly — one by one.  
The while she heard the hymn, she once had sung,  
Reverberate and blend into the low,  
The gentle sighing of known willow trees:  
“Ave, sweet Queen of heaven, here below,  
Your faithful flock, we pray on bended knees.”  
Then, as the sun embraced her low bowed head,  
Her soul arose and with the music fled.

## HIGHLANDS

Remembered highlands, only seen  
With infant unrecording eyes,  
Lofty above the rolling green  
Of fertile plain, your peaks arise  
In silent moments in my mind,  
In holy moments in my heart  
To shine with splendor, unconfined,  
Through all the years that kept apart  
This wanderer from your dreaming height.  
Remembered highlands, wild with song  
Of skylarks in their morning flight —  
Unheard, yet heard in that sweet, long,  
Pulsating throb of blood and brain,  
In sleep, in waking, in each breath  
Of joy —

                  now known in this deep pain  
Of bleeding bodies, blackened sod,  
In every tortured hero's death . . .  
Where is thy vengeance, mighty God!

## IN MEMORIAM

(KAZIMIERZ PRZERWA TETMAJER)

Lost in the forest is the light — oh, lost  
Beyond all hope, the footworn path that led  
To its bright altar. No one may accost  
The gods with offerings, nor raise his head  
In song. The oaks no longer hold beneath  
Their shading boughs sweet conclave with the lone  
Pilgrim. Deep buried lies the laurel wreath,  
Trampled and by wild nettles overgrown.  
Grow you a cypress in your land of pine  
That would do noble mourning for your loss?  
Will your austere white mountains break their sign  
Of silences, and, waking, rise and toss  
Your grief in mournful echoes, mounting high  
From crag to peak up to the listening sky?



## PRAYERS

The prayers my mother used to chant,  
Like fragrance floating on the wind  
Softly upon a sleepless night,  
Come crowding through my mind:

Sweet morning prayers, born in the hills,  
Of notes dropped from a skylark's song,  
And evening prayers of thankfulness,  
Steadfast in faith and strong.

Prayers from the Polish hill and plain —  
Softly they chime their ancient tunes:  
Above me rise the Polish skies  
With Polish stars and moons,

The stars group in a halo round  
The Virgin's face — so pale and sweet;  
The moon now bows his horns beneath  
The white flame of her feet.

Now time has hushed the prayers and fled,  
Leaving these broken, bloody years;  
Now through my heart crowd, night and day,  
The Polish children's tears.

## A WAYSIDE SHRINE

O Chryste, you have hung  
For centuries above this plain,  
In sorrow carved by one  
Who felt your pain  
And bore your cross —  
Your sorrow knew as his alone.

Among the grain that he had sown,  
His heart blood flowered  
Poppies red;  
And, then, he knew  
The thorns that pressed  
Upon your head,  
And carved your features as his own!

## SHELEST

*("Shelest" or "Szelest," a Polish word meaning "rustle,"  
but having a more elusive connotation, was proposed as  
an addition to the English language.)*

Shelest: a word you have not heard —  
Or, hearing, you forgot —  
A word the breeze in Eden's trees  
One youthful April wrought —

It softly sings in flying wings  
When summer skies look down,  
Sings low refrains in falling rains  
On russet, gold, and brown.

When willows bend to ride the wind  
And toss their streaming hair,  
Its accents creep like fairy sleep  
Upon the evening air.

It is reborn when stalks of corn  
With silken blossoms nod,  
Born on the plain of singing grain,  
The mighty sigh of God!

## TWILIT GARDEN

Oh, if I could for one brief moment come  
Back to that holy place,  
Where, in the trembling silences, I heard  
Your voice and glimpsed your face!

But paths grow vague beneath my straying feet,  
I seem to lose my way;  
Where music flowed upon the air now hangs  
The pall of closing day.

## VILLAGE STREET

My village street, drowned in the sun  
Of summer warmth from heaven's crest,  
Was draped with laces softly spun  
By waving willows on its breast,  
Bordered by grass entangled walks,  
Beaten by children's small bare feet,  
Hedged by uneven silent rocks—  
Narrowing, winding sun gold street  
Into a sea-green endless plain  
Of wind blown, sparkling summer grain . . .

Now torn by countless cruel feet—  
Unhappy tortured village street!

## FOR BISKUPIN

*(A settlement dating back to about 700-400 B.C.,  
discovered in Western Poland.)*

Above the brush, the tool, the pen,  
Above the words of countless bards,  
Lifts up this old unwritten song,  
To beat above these walls, these guards.

It is a flame burst from a spark  
Left in the ashes long ago —  
Beside an ember cold with age —  
Discovered by the winds that blow.

Searched out by fingers of the wind,  
From its deep tomb of secrecy,  
It points its flame across the land  
To burn beside the waiting sea.

Oh, listen to this flaming song,  
Its accents of a storied past;  
Attune your heart to its sweet words,  
Your mind unto its rhythms vast!

## A TOAST

I raise this chalice to you who have flown  
To scale the mountains of eternity,  
Leaving shell ridden, trampled fields overblown  
With purple banners to your memory;  
To you who bravely through the blackest clouds  
Followed the silver bugles of your dreams,  
To find a road apart from alien crowds  
That still leads where the fount of beauty streams.  
I read your dustless records, through and through,  
And find we span this earth, each in his way.  
Even as you, and as the least of you,  
Were lured by stars, the fleeting light of day.  
    Before this chalice breaks upon the brink  
    I raise it high — above the clouds — and drink!

## NO GREATER BEAUTY

There is no greater beauty than the rain,  
Falling in small swift drops on roofs and eaves,  
Hurling and thrumming at my window pane —  
Upon the trees to break their boughs with leaves;  
No greater beauty than to see the worn,  
Dark hedge of barberry spread eagerly  
A wave of green above its tiny thorn —  
The lawns into a flowing jade green sea;  
No greater beauty than to know this wave  
Of joy across my heart that spring has come . . .  
O symbol of new life above the grave!  
O spring, with your reverberating drum,  
Awaken on the clock of time the hour  
That shall strike full the doom of evil power!













